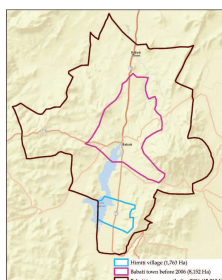


Rururbanization

– a threat to agricultural intensification and food security?

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The "Great North Road" southward from Babati Town in 1996 and 2013. Although still rural in character, the farming area is now defined as "urban".

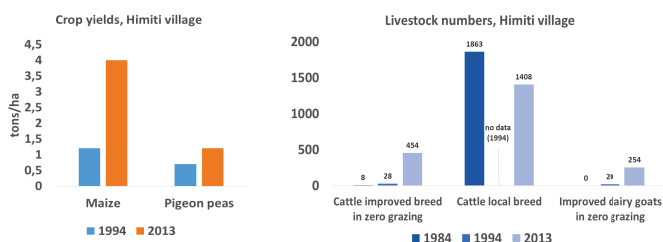
The development of rururbs in Tanzania

A rururb can be defined as: (1) a rural area with an urban population density, but with pastoral, agricultural, and kinship values that it cannot fully support (Moore 1986:223), or (2) a rural area which is transferred into administration as an urban area. The former is a well-documented phenomenon in Kilimanjaro since the 1930s, while the latter – outlined in this case – is a situation where medium- to high potential areas around market towns are urbanized "by definition", as e.g. the incorporation of rural villages in new town councils. Rururbanization – the development into rururbs – has the same effect in both cases: agricultural intensification comes to a halt, and agricultural activities need to relocate.

The conflict between urban expansion and agricultural intensification is a global challenge to food security. This study explores rural villages in Babati District, Tanzania, that since 2006 are incorporated in plans for urban development. Now being part of a town council administration, decades of efforts towards sustainable intensification are jeopardized as the villages experience out-migration of farmers.

Agricultural intensification

In Himiti village, the primary indicators of agricultural intensification over the studied period are: (1) increased yield per hectare of the dominant crops (maize and pigeon peas), and (2) the gradual transformation of animal husbandry from large herds of free-ranging cattle to intensive zero-grazing of high-yielding cattle and dairy goats.



The main explanation for crop yield increase is the continuous adoption of improved seed varieties and the intercropping of maize and pigeon peas. The use of industrial fertilizer is still marginal in this area. Application of farmyard manure is gradually increasing, but is confined to fields near the homestead. The adoption of improved cattle and dairy goats is a result of long-standing support and project activities in the area.

Conclusion

The results suggest that – in spite of tripled maize yields over 20 years – farmers move to more distant areas in Babati district. The study discloses the heterogeneity in rural Africa, where high-potential areas with stabilizing population growth have a crucial role as engines in the process of sustainable agricultural intensification and food security. Farmers' relocation may set off agricultural intensification elsewhere, but is more likely to result in exploitation of marginal or low-potential lands. More research is needed on effects of urbanization on agricultural intensification in rural Africa.

Methodological Approach

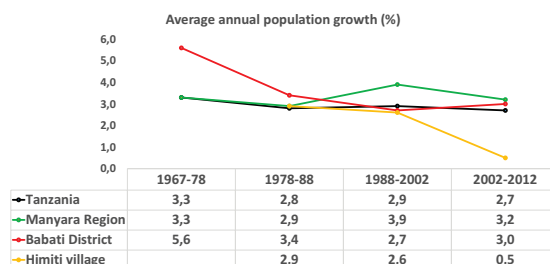
The results are based on population and agricultural production data collected through local interviews and available statistics in 1994 and 2014, respectively. Land use maps were produced as a part of a PhD thesis in 1994 (Hillbur 1998), and for the current situation, recent maps (2012) were studied and combined with field observations. In 2013 and 2014, interviews with key informants have been conducted for this specific aim, as well as a review of land use policy documents at the village, district and national levels

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Population dynamics

The search for productive arable land has attracted a large number of immigrants to Babati District since the 1950s, and the population growth of Babati town and Manyara Region is among the highest in Tanzania. The development in Himiti village over the last decade show a strikingly different pattern.



The data suggest that the villages incorporated in the new Town Council experience a much slower growth recently, indicating out-migration of farming households. Over time, when urban settlements and services are established, villages like Himiti are expected to attract urban dwellers on the once productive farmland.

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